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PARIS AND HECTOR IN TRADITION AND IN HOMER

BY JOHN A. SCOTT

In the first thousand lines of the *Iliad* Achilles, Agamemnon, either Ajax, Idomeneus, Diomedes, Nestor, Odysseus, Menelaus, Calchas, and Patroclus have been introduced in action or mentioned by name. The prominent heroes or characters are thus marched across the stage at the very outset; then, when in later scenes of the poem they have played their parts, they reappear at the games in honor of Patroclus, make their farewell bow, and disappear with no traces of mental or physical soreness. They are thus restored to the condition in which they were before the "Wrath" began. Evidently Homer had the conception of the Greek heroes distinctly in mind from the start; tradition, for the most part, had furnished him with their names and had already settled their fates: Agamemnon could not die in battle, for his death was reserved for his return, and so Odysseus, Diomedes, Idomeneus, Nestor, and Menelaus must not fall at Troy, since their home-coming was a settled part of the epic saga, nor could any warrior win glory by slaying Ajax. The Greek leaders, as well as the individual fate of each, were already fixed and decided by tradition, which passing on from one Greek generation to the next would be definite and exact on the Greek side, but most vague and deficient concerning the Trojans. Homer had no knowledge of the Trojans except as Greek pride or Greek patriotism preserved it. Although the Greek leaders pass in review at once and we know who are to be the actors in subsequent events, there is no such an introduction of the Trojans. Except Hector and Priam, who are casually referred to in Book i, the Trojans are named only when they act. Paris does not enter and we have no inkling of his connection with the war until he comes in to challenge Menelaus to a duel. Aeneas, Glaucus, Sarpedon appear first in the Aristeia of Diomedes, Helenus makes his initial bow in Book vi, Dolon in x, Polydamas in xi, while Coon, who forces Agamemnon to withdraw from his triumphant Aristeia, and Socus, who wounds Odysseus, win glory and death at

their first appearance; Deiphobus and Asteropaeus are first named in xii; while Euphorbus, destined to have the great honor of wounding Patroclus, is not mentioned previous to that exploit.

The poem is manifestly written entirely from the side of the Greeks, while the Trojans are introduced or created merely that they, the Greeks, may have antagonists.

It is in finding names and exploits for the Trojans that Homer appears at his weakest. Tradition, Greek tradition, had supplied him with very few foreign names, hence nearly all the Trojans are fitted out with good Greek names.

Book iv mentions a Greek with the name Chromius, then in later books four Trojans appear bearing that same name, one Greek and three Trojans have the Greek name Melanippus, one Greek and two Trojans are called Antiphus, two Trojans have the name Adrastus, two Astynous, two Ennomus, two Ophelestes, two Pylartes, two Thersilochus, and more than a score of the Trojans, such as Alestor, Medon, Noemon, Orestes, are identical in name with some Greeks of the poem. Tradition failed, too, to give Homer the names of Trojan gods, hence he assigns them an Athena with her pure Greek priestess, Theano. This same tradition failed to provide Hector with a wife, else she had not appeared with the Greek name Andromache. The same is true of the son Astyanax, as well as of his brothers and half-brothers, Deiphobus, Helenus, Polydorus, Polites, Antiphonus, and Agathon.

Paris is the only one of the Trojan leaders who has an undisputed foreign name. It seems unlikely that tradition could have preserved the name of the son and forgotten that of the father; hence the tradition found in Apollodorus ii. 6. 4, that Priam was at one time called *Ποδάρκης*, is probably to be accepted as showing that the Greeks regarded Priam as a foreign name which they translated with Podarces, just as they translated the Trojan name Paris with Alexander. If Hector ever really had the Trojan name Darius, Homer gives no hint that he knew it.¹ Even if tradition told how a foreign prince with a foreign name sailed to Greece to entice Helen, it did not give the names of his companions, and accordingly the poet must have his ship built by a Greek, *Φέρεκλος*, the son of the Greek

¹ See Lewy, *Die semitischen Fremdwörter im Griechischen*, pp. 196 ff.

Τέκτων, whose sire was pure Greek, as is shown by his patronymic, Ἀρμονίδης.

Hector, in name, dress, character, and all, is a Greek loaned to the enemy; Paris by these same tokens is foreign throughout.

The thesis I wish to establish is this: Paris was the traditional leader and champion of the Trojans, but for moral reasons could not be made the protagonist in the poem, hence the poet degraded him and created a hero of sufficient nobility of character to win sympathy for his cause. Hector, therefore, as he appears in Homer is the creation of the poet who conceived the idea of the *Iliad*.

The place of Paris in tradition and Homer will first be discussed. We have scant knowledge of the contents of the *Cyclic Poems*, yet from the *Chrestomathia* of Proclus we learn that Paris was the leading actor in the *Cypria*, the poem narrating the events immediately preceding the action of the *Iliad*, that he was a person of sufficient importance to be called upon to decide the contest of the goddesses, that he took a fleet to Greece in order to win Helen, and that on the way home he was able to capture the wealthy city of Sidon. All of this is in harmony with the conceptions of the *Iliad*, even if not definitely expressed. The deeds of no other Trojan find any place in tradition as reflected in the *Cypria*. The phrase καὶ θνήσκει Πρωτεσίλαος ὑφ' Ἑκτορος is not an independent tradition, but is founded on the *Iliad* and in violation of Homer, as I shall show later.

In the *Aethiopis*, the poem which takes up the events that follow the close of the *Iliad*, Achilles is slain by Paris with the aid of Apollo. No other Trojan is named by Proclus as sharing in the events of this poem. The *Ilias Parva* follows the *Aethiopis*, during the action of which Paris is slain by Philoctetes who has just come from Lemnos. Even here Paris is not slain as a coward or in flight, but was bold enough to face Philoctetes in a duel. No other Trojan acts in this poem, so far as known from Proclus, except Helenus, who like a traitor tells the Greeks how his own city may be taken.

Here we find that in the first three poems of the *Cycle*, leaving the *Iliad* out of account, Paris is the only Trojan whose acts are of sufficient importance to receive mention in the *Chrestomathia* of

Proclus. Paris alone of the Trojans had the honor in tradition of causing the death of a Greek leader, and that leader was none other than Achilles.

The character of Paris in the *Iliad* involves constant contradictions. The first great contradiction is that he who is to be such a craven and a coward should be introduced as Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής, Γ 16. Why this honoring name? Scholiast to M 93: ἐκλήθη οὖν Πάρις, οὐχ ὥς τινές φασιν, ὅτι ἐν πῆρᾳ ἐτράφη, ἀλλ' ὅτι τὸν μόνον παρήλθεν ὕστερον δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος, ὅτι τῇ πατρίδι ἠλέξησεν, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐβοήθησε, πολεμίων ἐπελθόντων. Evidently the honoring titles, δῖος Ἀλέξανδρος, Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής, Ἀλεξάνδρῳ βασιλῆι, which, at first glance, seem so inappropriate in Homer are in complete harmony with pre-Homeric tradition.

The second contradiction is found in the fact that a Greek with his feeling that to be beautiful is also to be brave, καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός, should have represented a coward as handsome. Paris is εἶδος ἄριστος, Γ 39, and because of his beauty the Greeks thought he was the Trojan champion. It was the physical defects in Thersites on which the poet placed emphasis, and Homer had a real difficulty in representing the handsome figure of Paris in the guise of a poltroon.

A third contradiction is found in the continued influence of Paris. After he had fled in Book iii and disgraced himself and his cause he should have had but little influence or power, yet on the evening of this very day, when Antenor makes the inevitable suggestion that their oaths be kept and Helen with her possessions be returned to the Greeks, Paris arises and insultingly replies:

H 357: Ἀντήνορ, σὺ μὲν οὐκέτ' ἐμοὶ φίλα ταῦτ' ἀγορεύεις· . . .
 εἰ δ' ἐτεὸν δὴ τοῦτον ἀπὸ σπουδῆς ἀγορεύεις,
 ἐξ ἄρα δὴ τοι ἔπειτα θεοὶ φρένας ὤλεσαν αὐτοί.

He flatly refuses to let Helen be returned to Menelaus, no one answers him, Hector is mute, and the herald is sent to deliver to the Greeks the opinion of Paris. The apparent character of Paris was so out of keeping with his power that Herodotus, ii. 120, could only explain the contradiction by assuming a tradition according to which Helen was never in Troy, but had been held in Egypt; otherwise Hector, in spite of Paris, would have delivered her to the Greeks. "Nor was it as if Alexander had been heir to the crown, in which case he might

have had the chief management of affairs, since Priam was already old. Hector, who was his elder brother, and a far braver man, stood before him, and was the heir to the kingdom. And it could not be Hector's interest to uphold his brother in his wrong, when it brought such dire calamities upon himself and the other Trojans. But the fact was that they had no Helen to deliver" (Rawlinson's translation). It is most significant that while Priam's other married sons and daughters lived in the same palace with their father (Z 242 ff.), Paris had a palace all his own. The description of this palace (Z 313 ff.) shows that it was of unusual beauty.

Paris is no coward in Homer and no weakling, since his heroic proportions show through, despite the efforts of the poet to represent him as mean and timorous. This is shown by the fact that he and not Hector determined the decision of the assembly, and by the following minute details: Paris was a leader of one of the great divisions of the Trojans (M 93). When Aeneas was hard-pressed by the Greeks he called for help, "trying to fix his eye on Paris" (N 490). In the very thick of the fight when Hector moves along the portions most engaged he finds Paris:

N 765: τὸν δὲ τάχ' εὔρε μάχης ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ δακρυοέσσης
 δῖον Ἀλέξανδρον, Ἑλένης πόσιν ἠνκόμοιο,
 θαρσύνονθ' ἐτάρους καὶ ἐποτρύνοντα μάχεσθαι.

His acts are in keeping with his words to Hector:

N 784: νῦν δ' ἄρχ', ὅππῃ σε κραδίη θυμός τε κελεύει·
 ἡμεῖς δ' ἐμμεμῶτες ἅμ' ἐψόμεθ', οὐδέ τί φημι
 ἀλκῆς δευήσεσθαι, ὅση δύναμὶς γε πάρεστιν.

The day was saved for the Trojans because of the skill of Paris:

Λ 504: οἷδ' ἄν πω χάζοντο κελεύθου δῖοι Ἀχαιοί,
 εἰ μὴ Ἀλέξανδρος, Ἑλένης πόσις ἠνκόμοιο,
 παῦσεν ἀριστεύοντα Μαχάονα ποιμένα λαῶν
 ἰφ' τριγλῶχινι βαλὼν κατὰ δεξιὸν ὤμον.

But one Greek of any prominence is slain in the action of the *Iliad*, while comparatively few are wounded. Paris is the only Trojan to wound a Greek of the first rank who is not himself slain. Euphorbus and Hector who caused the death of Patroclus, Pandarus who wounded Diomedes, Coon who pierced Agamemnon, and Socus who thrust Odysseus paid for their brief glory with their lives; while

Paris, without divine aid, wounded Diomedes, Machaon, and Eurypylos, slew Euchenor, Menesthius, and Deiochus; yet Paris escaped. His greatness in Homer is of a piece with the *Cypria*, *Aethiopis*, and *Ilias Parva*.

Paris was an archer, but that was no disgrace, despite the angry words of the wounded Diomedes. A people who regarded the ambush as the place of greatest honor (A 257) and a tradition which gave glory to such archers as Teucer and Philoctetes, or made the bow of Heracles his greatest possession and the bow of Odysseus the arbiter of marriage—these could not have considered archery a source of infamy. Paris' sole weakness was moral weakness, and great as he was in tradition and is in Homer, the adulterer and false friend could not be permitted a position of epic leadership. No people under the control of such a leader as Paris could win sympathy, but since tradition furnished the Trojans with no other leader the poet must create one.

Hector has no place in the pre-Homeric traditions as given in the *Cypria*. In that poem his name is found but once, where it is said that he slew Protesilaus: καὶ θνήσκει Πρωτεσίλαος ὑφ' Ἑκτορος. Homer knew nothing of this, as his account of the death of the same warrior shows:

B 698: τῶν αὖ Πρωτεσίλαος ἀρήμιος ἡγεμόνευεν
 . . . τὸν δ' ἔκτανε Δάρδανος ἀνὴρ
 νηὸς ἀποθρώσκοντα πολὺ πρῶτιστον Ἀχαιῶν.

The author of the *Cypria*, with the plot of the *Iliad* before him, could not see why so important a hero as Hector had no standing in tradition outside of Homer, and so found him a place by quietly removing the Homeric Δάρδανος ἀνὴρ and substituting Hector. Here the attempt to give Hector a position in the *Cycle* not warranted by pre-Homeric tradition is evident and unmistakable.

It is a matter of common observation that many of the leaders in the events described by the *Iliad* have designations which have no adequate explanation in the action of the poem itself. Priam who does not wield a spear is nevertheless ἐνμμελῆς and though withdrawn from battle is still δαίφρων. Achilles, whether he be standing or seated, is πόδας ὠκὺς and ποδώκης, yet on the one occasion where he has the opportunity to show this fleetness of foot

he was unable to overtake Hector, and must needs receive the help of Athena, who orders him to refresh himself while she induces Hector to come near. The simple fact that an epithet is applied to Achilles which has no interpretation in the events of the *Iliad* shows that he is a traditional hero and not the creation of the poet. The epithet must have its explanation elsewhere. Odysseus early in the *Iliad* is called ὁ πτολίπορθος Ὀδυσσεύς (B 278), the reason for which is found not in this poem, but in outside tradition. Many other examples might be given, but these sufficiently illustrate the principle that in the *Iliad* certain epithets carry the implicit proof of traditions other than those used by the poet. If Hector be an old and traditional hero he should bring into the poem with him some traces of his earlier existence. What epithets are applied to Hector? He is ἀνδροφόνος, κορυθαίολος, δῖος, μέγας, φαίδιμος, διίφιλος, ὄβριμος, ἀτάλαντος "Ἄρηι, ὁ λυσσώδης φλοῖγί εἵκελος, θρασύς, πελώριος, κρατερὸν μῆστωρα φόβοιο, Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντος, ἴσος "Ἄρηι, χαλκοκορυστής, μεγάλθυμος, βοὴν ἀγαθός, κύον, ἵπποδάμος, μάχης ἄτος, θρησὺν ἡνίοχον, ἄλαστε, ποιμένα λαῶν, νῆπιε, κλυτός, φίλτατε παίδων, δαέρων φίλτατε. Here is an unrivaled richness and variety of epithet, yet no one of them refers to any relationship, trait, or quality not shown in the poem itself. The *Iliad* furnishes a full explanation of every attribute given to Hector in Homer. If the number of epithets were small this might be due to accident, but here chance can have no part, and we may confidently assume that the tradition which among so many epithets has left no traces of its influence had no influence to leave, and that the character of Hector was beyond its power to shape or change.

As already said, the Trojan leader, Paris, whom tradition furnished, was for moral reasons unworthy to be the great leader of either side, hence the poet was obliged to substitute another whose human and moral excellencies fitted him for leadership. The degradation of Paris involved one great contradiction, namely, in giving the hearer the impression that the warrior who did so much was a coward; the creation of Hector involved the second great contradiction, namely, in giving that same hearer the impression that the warrior who did so little was a mighty champion. Tradition narrowed the poet's range in either case; he could create a hero, but not a war.

The prowess of the Trojans is described only in general terms, since no Greek of real importance is slain during the course of the *Iliad*. Patroclus is prominent merely because of his relations with Achilles, and besides him only two of any consequence fall, Medon, the bastard son of Ajax Oileus, and the colorless Tlepolemus. On the Trojan side the slaughter is almost complete; Adrastus (the Greek names deserve notice), Asteropaeus, Dolon, Euphorbus, Hippothous, Cebriones, Lycaon, Socus, Coon, Pandarus, Sarpedon, and Hector, these all perish. Paris is the only Trojan to wound a great leader and then escape with his life. Evidently the strength of tradition tied Homer's hands, and gave Paris a charmed life in the *Iliad*.

Hector receives high praise in vague and general expressions, but the events of the poem give no warrant for assigning him a high place as a soldier. He is found retreating at his first appearance in battle, he is no match for Ajax in the duel, is almost slain by Diomedes with a spear and by Ajax with a rock, fainting each time; while he flies before Odysseus, Agamemnon, Patroclus, Diomedes, Ajax, and Achilles. It is only as a man, a son, a husband, and a father that Hector really wins respect; that is, just in those qualities where he can appear noble without fighting the Greeks. Why is Hector so great as a man, so rarely great as a soldier? If one reads the list of the Trojans he will find, as already noted, that they with few exceptions have Greek names; hence are Greek creations or adaptations. The Greeks had their own tradition of their own leaders conducting a war at Troy to recover Helen, who had been taken from Menelaus by Paris. Paris bears a Trojan name, his part in the cycle is sure, but tradition as far as the Trojans were concerned went little farther. It did not tell who built the ship, and so the poet had it built by a Greek who came of a line of Greek ancestors. The name Hector is probably Greek, as it has a good Greek derivation. If he, Hector, did really have the Trojan name Darius, then he was a subordinate Trojan rechristened with a Greek name and elevated to leadership. Homer gives no hint of having known Hector under any other name. It is doubtful if the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon had a larger place in the early Greek traditions of Troy than the quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus, which is given but ten verses in the eighth book of the *Odyssey* (viii. 73 ff.). At the opening of the *Iliad*

the Greeks are before Troy, and the Trojans are within the walls. The Greeks lose no leader, warrior, or king of independent influence. At the close of the poem both sides are in the same relative positions in which they were at the beginning. On the Trojan side the slaughter has been almost annihilation. Those who fell, Adrastus, Pandarus, Hector, and the rest, were for the most part created to be participants in the events occasioned by the Wrath of Achilles. They never had an existence elsewhere, and by their death the poet accounted for their absence from subsequent events of the *Trojan Cycle*. This explains the contradictions in the character of Hector. The Greek leaders were fixed and the fate of each known. Tradition had decided that Ajax was to fall by his own hand, Achilles to be slain by Paris, Agamemnon by his wife and by Aegisthus, and so the fate of each was already determined. What was there left for Hector? No new Greek general of any importance could be added, and no local hero could be replaced, no more than a modern historical novel of the American Revolutionary War could add a new and important general to the list of famous heroes. Homer then was forced to make a Trojan champion without the privilege of allowing him to slay any one of the really great Greeks. Hector's greatness, therefore, is to be not military but human. Even so he must have some military glory, and accordingly the poet created the character of Patroclus. Patroclus does not appear in the *Catalogue of the Ships*, is not named in the *Cypria* except under the influence of the *Iliad*, *Λυκάονά τε Πάτροκλος εἰς Δῆμνον ἀγαγὼν ἀπεμπολᾷ*. Here the author of the *Cypria*, unable to explain the absence of Patroclus from tradition, reshapes the story of Lycaon, as found in Homer, to give Patroclus a place. Lycaon says to Achilles:

Φ 78: καί μ' ἐπέρασσας ἀνέθην ἄγων πατρός τε φίλων τε
 Δῆμνον εἰς ἡγαθέην.

Evidently the author of the *Cypria* used the *Iliad* to secure a little glory for Patroclus in the same way that he gave to Hector the honor of slaying Protesilaus. There were no families claiming descent from Patroclus, and the poet explains his lack of heroic following by the simple device of having him slay one of his youthful companions. His lack of descendants hinges on the same device. There was no place for Phoenix in a poem which exalted Patroclus, since each owed

his prominence to the friendship of Achilles. The creation of the part of Hector involved the degradation of Paris; the creation of Patroclus, the practical elimination of Phoenix. In the paper, "Phoenix in the Iliad," *A.J.P.*, XXXIII, 68 ff., I recognized that the prominence of Patroclus had caused the eclipse of Phoenix, but did not then see the reason for the existence of Patroclus. Homer, like an Athenian father, could cause the death of no children but his own; Patroclus he could expose, but tradition's child, Phoenix, he must not kill. So he might slay Hector, and also, just because he was the poet's own, he could make him his mouthpiece to express his own advanced views on religion, patriotism, and domestic relations. In religion Hector is frankly rationalistic:

M 237: τὴν γ' δ' οἰωνοῖσι τανυπτερύγεσσι κελεύεις
 πείθεσθαι, τῶν οὐ τι μετατρέπομ' οὐδ' ἀλεγίζω,
 εἴ τ' ἐπὶ δεξιῇ ἴωσι πρὸς ἧν τ' ἡέλιόν τε,
 εἴ τ' ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ τοί γε ποτὶ ζόφον ἡερόεντα.

There is nothing traditional about this. However it may appeal to modern sympathies, it shocked the ancients. Scholiast to this passage remarks: ὁ φρόνιμος καὶ θεὸν τιμᾶν οἶδε καὶ οἰωνοῖς πείθεσθαι, ὅπερ Ἐκτωρ οὐ συνίησιν.

His views on patriotism are expressed in O 496:

 τεθάτω· οὐ οἱ ἀεικὲς ἀμυνομένη περὶ πάτρης
 τεθάμεν·

while his ideals of domestic relations are shown in the tenderness with which Hector treats Andromache. It is certainly worthy of note that this devoted husband should have been reared in a polygamous household and should himself have championed a war founded on treachery and adultery.

Milton stood in much the same relation to his sources as Homer stood to his. Milton must have an Adam and an Eve, a Garden of Eden, a Satan, a Tree of Forbidden Fruit. The tempter must appear in the form of a serpent and the woman must be the first to fall; all these he had in the Bible and they must be retained. The poetry, the descriptions, and most of the incidents were his own. Homer likewise had a list of Greek heroes, and a brief reference to the Wrath of Achilles, he was familiar with the story of the Rape of

Helen by Paris, a prince from Troy. Tradition supplied him with scant information in regard to the Trojans, hence the long list of Trojans with Greek names. Although tradition told of the death of such first-class Greek heroes as Protesilaus, Palamedes, Achilles, and Ajax at Troy, it told of the death of none during the Wrath of Achilles. Accordingly the poet had to content himself with the death of so subordinate a leader as Patroclus.

This is in complete accord with the thesis of Doctor Leaf's *Troy* that "The *Iliad* is a real record of a real event." He does not mean that Thetis brought Achilles an armor from Olympus, that Aphrodite rescued Paris, or that Athena trapped Hector, but he does mean that a real war was fought in a real place, and that that place was the Troad. Professor Davis' novel, *A Victor of Salamis*, describes a real war in a real place, but the hero and most of the incidents are fictitious. One is history treated as poetry, the other history treated as fiction.

The saga provided Homer with the idea of the Wrath, but the conception of Hector and Patroclus was the poet's own. The dialogue, the speeches, the enthusiasm, the pathos, all the human interest were Homer's and only Homer's. Homer was far removed from the beginnings of poetry. The beauty and finish of his verse and language show long ages of development and prove that many great poets lived before Homer, just as "many brave men lived before Agamemnon." These poets who were before Homer furnished him with the tools with which he worked, but he was the first to conceive of the Wrath of Achilles as the theme of a great epic.

The *Iliad* is not the production of a poet who reshaped and refitted the work of others into a more perfect whole, who found his characters already made and touched them now at this place, now at that, who added a little here, removed a little there, but of a poet who largely created his own characters and gave them a name. Tradition gave no parallel account of the events of the *Iliad* from the simple fact that the events of the *Iliad* never had a being until created by the genius of Homer.

If the *Iliad* be the work of *Volkspoesie*, or the poetic expression of an entire people, why was all that poetic ability centered on so unimportant a segment of epic tradition as the Wrath, and but ten

verses given to the quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus, "the glory of which," Homer himself tells us, "reached the heavens"?

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NOTE.—That Hector and Ajax face each other so often is no proof of pre-Homeric tradition. Homer expressly says that Ajax was second only to Achilles. In the absence of Achilles he, Ajax, naturally would be most called upon to face the champion of the Trojans. When Achilles appears Ajax retires and the champion of the Greeks, Achilles, faces and slays the champion of the Trojans, Hector.

If there was a real shrine dedicated to Hector in Thebes, the origin is easily explained. The word Hector is in derivation the "defender," the same as the Latin *stator*. What more natural than for a city to dedicate a shrine to the "Defender"? Then later generations would confound the divine "Defender" with the Trojan "Defender," Hector.